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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: COURT HEARINGS OF TWO POLITICAL PARTIES DELAYED  
AGAIN

REF: CAIRO 3582

CLASSIFIED BY: MINISTER-COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
WILLIAM R. STEWART, FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (SBU) ON NOVEMBER 4, THE STATE COUNCIL COURT POSTPONED CONSIDERATION OF A SUIT FILED BY THE MODERATE-ISLAMIST WASAT ("MIDDLE") PARTY, APPEALING THE GOVERNMENT'S REJECTION OF ITS LICENSE APPLICATION, AND LIKEWISE POSTPONED A SIMILAR SUIT FILED BY THE NASSERITE AL KARAMA ("DIGNITY") PARTY. BOTH PARTIES HAVE LONG FOUGHT FOR LEGAL RECOGNITION; WASAT FOR A DECADE, AND KARAMA FOR OVER TWO YEARS.

¶2. (SBU) THE WASAT PARTY IS APPEALING THE 1996 DECISION OF THE GOES POLITICAL PARTIES COMMITTEE TO REJECT ITS APPLICATION FOR LEGAL RECOGNITION ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE EGYPTIAN CONSTITUTION FORBIDS RELIGIOUSLY-BASED PARTIES. (NOTE: IN ORDER FOR A POLITICAL PARTY TO BE LEGALLY REGISTERED, IT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES COMMITTEE, WHICH IS COMPOSED OF THE SPEAKER OF THE SHOURA COUNCIL, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, MINISTER OF INTERIOR, STATE MINISTER FOR AFFAIRS OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, AND THREE PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED-INDIVIDUALS (NORMALLY SENIOR JUDGES) WHO ARE NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY. END NOTE).

¶3. (SBU) AL WASAT OFFICIALS CONTEND THAT THEIR PARTY IS NOT IN CONFLICT WITH THE CONSTITUTION; ALTHOUGH THE PARTY RECOGNIZES THE "ISLAMIC FRAMEWORK" OF EGYPTIAN SOCIETY, ITS PLATFORM CALLS FOR TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM, AND AL WASAT INCLUDES A NUMBER OF COPTS AMONG ITS CO-FOUNDERS AND MEMBERSHIP. AL WASAT WAS GIVEN A NEW HEARING DATE OF JANUARY 6, 2007, AND PARTY LEADER ABOU EL-ELA MADY TOLD US HE IS "OPTIMISTIC" THAT A RULING WILL BE GRANTED AT THE NEXT COURT SESSION WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

¶4. (C) THE NASSERIST AL KARAMA PARTY WAS GIVEN A NEW HEARING DATE OF DECEMBER 2. THE PARTY IS APPEALING A 2004 RULING BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES COMMITTEE REJECTING ITS LICENSE APPLICATION TO FORM A PARTY; THE COURT PROCEEDINGS HAVE BEEN DELAYED REPEATEDLY OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. KARAMA MP SAAD ABOUD (PROTECT) TOLD US THAT PARTY LEADERS DO NOT EXPECT A FAVORABLE RULING AT THEIR NEXT HEARING - "EITHER ANOTHER DELAY OR A RULING AGAINST US IS THE LIKELY OUTCOME." (NOTE: ABOUD IS ONE OF TWO KARAMA-AFFILIATED PARLIAMENTARIANS, BOTH OF WHOM RAN AS INDEPENDENTS IN THE 2005 PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. END NOTE).

¶5. (SBU) POLITICAL OBSERVERS POINT TO THE REFUSAL OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES COMMITTEE TO REGISTER THE TWO PARTIES, AND THE CONTINUED DELAY IN THE COURT PROCEEDINGS APPEALING THOSE DECISIONS, AS EVIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO FORMALLY ALLOW SERIOUS COMPETITORS ONTO THE POLITICAL PLAYING FIELD. WITHOUT BEING OFFICIALLY REGISTERED, A POLITICAL PARTY CANNOT LEGALLY COMPETE IN ELECTIONS, OPEN A PARTY HEADQUARTERS OR BANK ACCOUNT, ORGANIZE MEETINGS, OR LEGALLY

ACCEPT MEMBERS.  
RICCIARDONE